

Strategies for Increasing Immunization Rates

Many available strategies work to increase immunization. The value of a strategy depends upon its implementation, its potential effectiveness, and how well it is matched to target populations. Consider implementing the following options in your county:

#1

Understand childhood immunization in your community

In order to design strategies to increase immunization rates in your community, it's important to first understand the nature and extent of the issue. Make sure to work with your community partners--remember increasing immunization rates is an enormous task that involves many partners working together.

Questions to Ask:

- What is the immunization rate for children in my county?
- Are specific immunization rates lower in my county?
- Does immunization of children in child care facilities in my county match ACIP recommendations and ARM requirements?
- How many immunization providers in my county are using WIZRD?
- What do families say the barriers are to getting their children immunized?
- What are the gaps/barriers in your community regarding immunization such as non-use of WIZRD, reluctance to vaccinate or other efforts?

**Give the handout
“Suggestions to Improve
Your Immunization Services”
from the Immunization
Action Coalition to providers
in your county and evaluate
the results together.
Available on the MCHC
website at**

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/family-health/mchc/phsd-mch-index.shtml>

#2

Create a plan that fits your community! Select one or two from the following Recommended Interventions.

(1) Expanded Access Offer the following:

- “Drop-in” clinics
- Encourage providers to offer “nurse-only visits” for vaccines
- Vaccination services after regular hours
- Saturday clinics
- Immunization clinics in conjunction with other community events

(2) Performance Feedback

- Use a wall chart to track the number of patients vaccinated and measure the actual number vaccinated against an established goal
- Review and share quarterly immunization coverage rates sent to you from the MT DPHHS Immunization Section

(3) Increase Collaboration with WIC

- WIC refers participants who are unsure of their immunization status or are not current with immunizations to local immunization programs

Recommended Interventions (continued)

(4) Reminders

- **Daily patient list**—an office computer can be programmed to print a daily list of patients who are scheduled for an appointment and may need vaccines.
- **Telephoned Reminders**—office staff can call parents to remind them of their appointment. (See sample script on MCHC website)
- **Mailed Reminders**—a postcard or letter can be sent reminding parents to bring their child in for needed vaccinations. Patients are offered the opportunity to schedule an appointment. Reminder postcards are available free of charge in English and Spanish through the Montana Immunization Program. (See sample postcards on MCHC website)

(5) Education

- **Videos**—“Vaccines and Your Baby” and/or “Vaccines: Separating Fact from Fear”
www.chop.edu/service/vaccine-education-center/familyOrder.cfm
- **Educational Packets**—include information and resources such as the Vaccines for Children program (include eligibility criteria)
- **Posters**—place educational posters in child health care areas
- **Brochures and Educational materials**—distribute to parents, school staff, day care providers, community groups, churches, senior citizen groups (they have grandchildren!) and other interested parties

(6) Vaccinations reviewed at all healthcare encounters

- **Good office record keeping is critical.** Easy-to-read immunization chart records that are available at the time of the visit are essential. Putting in place a system that ensures a front sheet that is available and kept current is a great way to let physicians/nurses know which vaccinations are due for each patient. Immunization chart records are available free of charge for Children and Adults through the Montana Immunization Program.
- **Chart reminders** can range from a colorful sticker to a comprehensive checklist. These reminders can be placed in prominent positions in the charts of patients, indicating that they will need vaccines at the next visit. Samples include a posted note “No XXXX vaccine on record” that is stamped by a receptionist onto the chart where the physician/nurse will see the notation; an “Immunization Due” clip that is attached to the chart of an adolescent that needs a vaccine.

#3

Use an inclusive approach. When creating your action plan, make sure you work collaboratively across all sectors. Make sure you include these perspectives (whenever possible) in your outreach efforts:

- Faith Communities
- Schools
- Local Health Partners
- Existing Coalitions
- Civic Organizations
- Tribal Councils
- Cultural-Interest Groups
- Parents/Families
- Policymakers
- Social Services Providers
- Media
- Early Care and Education Providers

Need help putting a plan together? Contact the Maternal and Child Health Coordination Section at 406-444-4572

Additional resources are available on the Montana Immunization Program’s website at
<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Immunization/immune-index.shtml>